



**Nobody falls in
LOVE
with a logo.**

maxwell+miller
Brand Consulting & Creative

A logo on its own says nothing. A brand says everything.

There still seems to be a misconception that if you have a logo, you have a brand. I appreciate a good logo as much as the next guy. It's a symbol that can be used just about everywhere to say, "here's who we are." But it's not the brand. No way.

People don't fall in love with logos. But sparks fly when they feel a company understands them, shares their values, their traits, their personality.

A strong brand gives consumers a reason to buy beyond price and features. It represents everything a company is and cares about. It gives consumers a reason to love it.

On the following pages, we'll pass along a few tips on how to define your brand. So you can create unique brand stories that will kindle long-lasting relationships with consumers.

"Ask a few people to name a logo they like. Most likely, they'll choose one associated with a brand they admire. That's because what makes a good logo is a good brand. Not the other way around."

Seth Godin, Marketing Hall of Fame



When people think of your brand, what's the first thing they say?



If you're not sure what people think of your brand, then you've probably got a little work to do.

Here's the deal. There is little difference between competitive products in purely functional terms. Chances are, customers think they're all pretty much the same. So what tips the scale?

Effective branding — a brand story customers can relate to will make all the difference.

Here's why. What people think about a brand is often why one is chosen over another. The one they feel the strongest connection with wins. By uncovering a special something about your brand, then building a story around it, you'll be that winner.

Particularly in the age of Google, a strong brand is more important than ever. Your customers are shopping online without you even knowing it. Will your brand stand out and be the one chosen for the next step in the selection process?

If your brand is greeted with more "huh" than "hooray," it's time to take a good, hard look at it. And decide what needs to be done next.

"Your brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room."

Jeff Bezos, Amazon

Don't be the best. Be different.

I bet you think your product is the best in its category. Right? And you're telling that story in advertising, social media and so on. You're the best.

There's a problem though.

Chances are, if I asked your competitors about their products, they'd say the same thing. "We're the best." Oops. When everyone says they're best, everyone looks average. So you need to zig while they're zagging. Tout your difference.

The Volvo brand isn't built on "the best" cars. It's built on the safest. That makes them different. Kohler doesn't market the best toilets and faucets. It markets works of art. Again, a real difference.

What about your brand? Does it tell a story that makes it one of a kind, not one of the crowd?

It all starts with a brand strategy. Here's how to go about it.



"Unless you have absolute clarity of what your brand stands for, everything else is irrelevant."

Mark Barnes, Global CMO, Kellogg Co.

Without a brand strategy, you'll be lucky to hit your target.



Have you gotten down to brass tacks and defined exactly what it will take for consumers to feel your brand is the only one for them (quality, service and price don't count. Those aren't points of differentiation, they're points of entry.)

Why should a consumer feel your brand can meet their needs? What about your brand makes it transcend typical product/service offerings and build an emotional connection?

Guess what? Guesswork won't work. It takes commitment. And a plan.

A word of caution. Identifying that special something that instantly connects with customers means preconceived notions can't be allowed in the room. Are you and your team too close to the situation to see it clearly? It's hard to see the forest for the trees when you're a tree.

That's where a professional branding firm can help (we just happen to know one). It can guide you through the maze to develop a brand statement that will get noticed.

And get results.

"During difficult times, buyers will gravitate toward the brands they know, brands they love and trust."

Murt Kent, CEO, the Coca-Cola Company

Build your brand strategy on Discovery, Definition, Delivery.

A brand strategy that will stand the test of time — takes time. It requires a process of Discovery, Definition and Delivery.

1.) DISCOVERY

Interview executive leadership, employees and customers. Each of these groups can provide the insights required to build a brand strategy that resonates with consumers.

Meeting with executive leadership allows for tapping into their experience and knowledge while also challenging their assumptions.

Employees often have an even better feel for what differentiates the company. The pride they have in what they do and why they do it often leads to branding insights not found in the boardroom.

Customers also provide a wealth of information. Give a customer the names of three companies, including yours, and ask what they think of each. The answer can lead to a defining moment.



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2.) DEFINITION

What was learned in the Discovery phase is defined and put into a branding statement consisting of:

- **What you do** — If someone asks what your company does, what would you say? What about others in your company? You'd be surprised how often there isn't a consistent answer.
- **For whom you do it** — When you communicate with customers on a person-to-person basis, it's much more effective. Develop customer personas that humanize target markets.
- **What they want** — Go beyond attributes and look to benefits. People don't want to buy a quarter-inch drill, they want a quarter-inch hole.
- **What makes you different** — A couple of hamburger patties and a slice of cheese on a bun are just that. Until you add "special sauce." Then, it's a Big Mac. What's your special sauce?



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3.) DELIVERY

Once the brand strategy is finalized and the branding statement written, the project is handed off from Einstein to Picasso (slight exaggeration). This is when branding specialists give the left-brain branding strategy to the right-brain artists and writers to craft a brand story.

Your brand team should be able to use all of today's appropriate media tools to connect with your target markets. From online to traditional media, you'll need someone with the resources to deliver your message in the most effective way.



"A branding program should be designed to differentiate your cow from all the other cattle on the range. Even if all the cattle on the range look pretty much alike."

Al Ries, The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding

Make sure your brand is recognized wherever it's seen.

No matter which channel your customers choose, a successful brand looks and feels consistent.

How to achieve brand consistency across channels

Make sure your audience has the same experience with your brand everywhere they go. Strive to reach consistency of:

- **Tone and Voice** — Customers will remember how you said it, as much as what you said.
- **Font** — Serious, elegant, easygoing? Make sure the font fits your brand's personality.
- **Color** — There are no right or wrong answers as long as the colors enhance brand perception.
- **Design Elements** — A picture is worth a thousand words, so make sure your graphics convey your brand story at a glance.
- **Messaging** — If customers were to remember just one thing about your brand, what should it be?



"Your culture is your brand."

Tony Hsieh, CEO, Zappos

How to tell when all this branding is paying off.



You know your brand is working when people are willing to pay a premium for your products or services, even though they might be available somewhere else for less.

That's always been the case with top-notch brands.

The reason is simple. If your business is viewed as a commodity, prospects won't see any difference between you and your competitors. So they'll choose on the difference they do see — price. Uh-oh.

The brands consumers love have one important thing in common: a promise that's not based on what's in the product, but what's in it for them.

When a brand delivers on a unique promise, people will be willing to pay more — whether they're located across the street or across the globe.

"Loyal customers, on average, are willing to pay a 20% premium for their brand of choice."

Kuczmariski & Associates

Make sure your brand story is well told.

Most companies and organizations have terrific brand stories to tell. They just have trouble telling them. Maxwell+Miller will make sure your brand story is well told — and forms a perception of your brand that works to your advantage.

We have created brand stories for a full spectrum of media vehicles — both traditional and online — that reflect the brand strategy, while increasing awareness, leads and sales.

Bottom line? When competitive products seem alike, the brand people feel a connection with wins. We'll develop branding that will make your brand the winner.

Your story starts here

Let's get together to explore the possibilities and share some ideas. Please contact our president, [Greg Miller](#).

Thanks.

"Your brand is the single most important investment you can make in your business."

Steve Forbes

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